

On the Covid Frontline

This comes from Nigel Beeton, (pictured below in his PPE) who works in Radiology in a hospital in the East of England, and who is one of the resident poets on Parish Pump!

During this time of the coronavirus crisis, he is writing a weekly diary of his life at the hospital

Is this the end of the beginning?

Is it too early to start using the past tense with regard to Covid-19?

Well, yes, of course it is. To abuse Winston Churchill's quote, this certainly is not the end, but it just might be the 'end of the beginning'. At our hospital, we are down to just five patients remaining in intensive care, for which I (and many others) thank the Lord.

I have a feeling that the turning point was Wednesday (22nd). Up to then I seemed to have my visor on as much as off, assisting my staff, mainly in CT:

Then, on Thursday, they didn't call me at all! Friday was a bit busier, but today (Sunday) the feeling that things are calming down is becoming more widespread.

I write with some trepidation, for even as a Christian I'm superstitious about using the 'Q' word. ('Quiet'. NEVER use that word in the presence of a working health professional!)

I apologise, Gentle Reader, for my darker blogs of a week or two ago, when I was raging at idiots for breaking the lockdown. Indeed, I was tired, and I can now share that I had fallen victim not to *the* virus but to *a* virus, when an agonizing rash spread across the right side of my body.

My GP asked me (on the phone) if I had been tired and run down. My slightly abrupt reply of 'haven't we all?' got a grunt of assent before she diagnosed me with an attack of the shingles. But now I find it feels less as though I've lost a fight with an aggrieved stallion and my own mood is lifting along with many of my colleagues, so I find myself able to give thanks that so many *did* observe the lockdown, and now we begin to see the benefits.

Sometimes over the past few years the NHS has felt like a bit of a public whipping boy, and indeed sometimes we have let people down, and if you are one of those people I am genuinely very sorry; but please don't ever think we do not care. We do. We get up in the morning in the hope of doing good, prepared to do daily battle with the forces that combine to do harm to the populations we serve. The Coronavirus is but one of those enemies, if you are concerned that any of the others have you in its



grip, heart disease, cancer, *anything*, then do seek help; we in the NHS will do our best to help you and to protect you from any other kind of harm.

But suddenly we in the NHS are getting thanked. For forty years I have plodded towards various hospitals at various odd times of day or night, and never once has anybody stopped me and said, 'thank you'. Nor would I have expected it (they do pay me!) but that is exactly what happened to me on Monday morning. I was just getting onto the site when a lady who I have never met asked me if I worked at the hospital. I replied in the affirmative, wondering what was coming. "Thank you," she said. "Thank you so much, all of you."

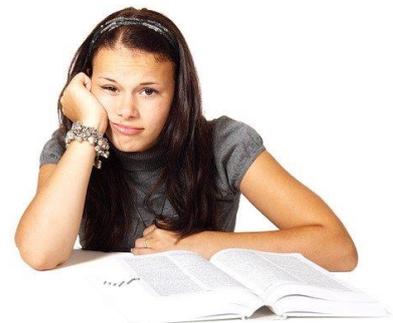
Well, thank *you*, ma'am. I cannot tell you how much the appreciation and support of the general public has meant to us all. The rainbows in the windows, the 'I love the NHS' slogans appearing everywhere, the clapping on Thursday evenings. And let us pray that, standing together as we have done, perhaps we are all beginning to turn the corner.

School's out too soon for the summer

Tim Yearsley of London Institute for Contemporary Christianity considers the emptiness many students feel. This article comes from <https://www.licc.org.uk/resources/schools-out/>, where you can find many more articles that look at current issues from a Christian point of view.

Any other year, unexpected freedom from end-of-term lectures and exam timetables would surely be cause for celebration. But this year, many students' terms have ended with a tremendous anti-climax.

Spare a thought for those who, whether they're sixth-formers or prospective grads, will have no summer term, no celebration party, no opportunity to hug their friend's goodbye. Many had to leave their student houses and head home suddenly, now figuring out how to complete their degrees from a distance. It wasn't meant to be like this. And there's nothing they can do about it, except sit in the disappointment.



The temptation is to run from or deny this reality: be it watching all of *Tiger King* in a weekend or bulldozing our emotions with 'God's in charge' mantras. But the gospel shows us and the students we know a better way. Rather than a God who shows us how to escape disappointment, Christians believe in a God who shows up *in* our disappointment.

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews captures this fact, in pointing out that Jesus is not 'unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses' (4:15). Jesus dealt with disappointment too – we see it in His response to His townsfolk's lack of faith, and His closest friends falling asleep when He needed them most.

If disappointment was an experience for Jesus, we can be sure it will be an experience for those who follow Him. Recognising there is no quick fix, on-demand, life-hack solution might be a way to help the students we love to come to terms with their disappointment.

To do so might even be the first step towards a more profound truth: Christians do not believe that we face disappointment alone. He is *Immanuel* – God with us. And as we discover that reality, our disappointment might not only be validated, it might be transformed. Knowing Jesus and trusting Him is a hope that ‘does not disappoint us’ (Romans 5:5). Because in God’s story, disappointment – whether a missed goodbye or a Saviour on a cross – is only momentary. The truth is that He’s putting this not-as-it-should-be world back together, as His kingdom comes, day by day. This is the hope of the gospel. And that kind of hope is good news for all of us, including students.



Source: Parish Pump

